

VDFP LOGBOOK

Virginia Department of Fire Programs Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 1

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A Message From the Executive Director

Happy New Year! I hope this month's edition of our Logbook finds you well and refreshed after the holiday season as we focus on the year ahead. Year 2005 promises to be dynamic for the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) and the Virginia fire and rescue service. Our agency will complete a variety of existing projects this year and play an important role in the completion of many initiatives that we share with our state partners.

Over the past year we've been working hard to consolidate our VDFP headquarters to Glen Allen, near the Virginia Center Commons Mall. You can find more indepth information about the move on page three of this month's Logbook.

Much progress has been made toward the implementation of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and VDFP is looking forward to signing a Memorandum of Agreement with several state agencies to deliver NIMS training that will align with each agency's curriculum package. We will soon be delivering the new course "NIMS for the Fire Service" that was just released by the National Fire Academy this month. Updated information on this program will be posted on our website as it becomes available.

We are also working toward completion of a Memorandum of Agreement with the Virginia Office of EMS and the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads to offer one statewide training program for vehicle rescue. Our training staff is currently working hard to ensure standardization of three vehicle rescue trailers, while aligning the training of all instructors who will deliver this technical program.

VDFP continues to work on enhancing the heavy and technical rescue capabilities across the Commonwealth. Some of our staff recently conducted a study of the HTR teams in each of our seven divisions around the state. Another project was started to type swift water teams in Virginia and VDFP has played a significant role in this collaboration with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) as we work to enhance water rescue response to all localities.

During the past year, VDFP has contributed to the enhancement of professional development, public fire and life safety education, research, and operational support during emergencies. This year, our team will strive to provide an even higher level of service, training, and education to our fire and emergency service stakeholders throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

As we continue through the winter season, please be reminded of potential fire hazards in the home that can occur from the improper use of heating systems and candles. If you have to travel during inclement weather, please pack some survival items and be aware of the hazards around you. For more information on winter safety tips, please visit our website at www.vafire.com.

Be safe,



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January 2005

A Message From the VFSB Chairperson

Greetings Virginia Firefighters and Happy New Year! The start of a new year holds the possibility of great and wonderful experiences. However, it may also bring about catastrophic events in which we find ourselves unprepared to sufficiently respond without proper training.

Disasters like the tsunami in Indonesia, California mudslides, and the South Carolina train accident resulting in a hazardous material leak, plague our evening newscasts. Upon hearing of these events, I often ponder the level of preparedness exhibited by me and the members of my crew.

As we know, each day in the fire service presents different challenges. I encourage all those involved in fire and rescue services to consider how additional training would improve their ability to respond to various incidents. The Virginia Fire Services Board, along with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, continues to expand training class offerings. We're also working to improve the curriculum used by state instructors.

There are over 40 different training topics administered by the VDFP. I hope that you and your fire organization can take advantage of the vast array of training available in 2005.

Be Safe,



Lora Sharkey
Chairperson
Virginia Fire Services Board

VFMA Trains Fire Marshals in Law Enforcement

On October 4, 2004 the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy launched its annual **Law Enforcement School for Fire Marshals**. This program gives fire marshals the tools to investigate crimes like arson. "What makes this school different from other law enforcement schools is that we are teaching students how to be an investigator versus a patrol officer," said Russ Chandler, VFMA Chief.

Over seven weeks twenty-three students studied legal foundations, interviewing techniques, surveillance and survival skills, and crime scene investigation competency. Students also trained with hydraulic pop-up targets that simulate innocent civilians and obvious crime threats. This "shoot or don't shoot" decision making exercise is crucial to the success of Fire Marshals with law enforcement authority.

After training exercises, instructors tested students through written tests and role play scenarios. All written tests, including those examining fire arms procedures, require 100% proficiency for passing.



The final objective of the training program is a role play simulating a crime investigation. Students must identify a perpetrator, secure proper search and arrest warrants, execute an arrest, and take the suspect into custody.

The final day of classes was a formal graduation ceremony. Family members, peers and supervisors took part in the occasion. A touching moment in the event occurred when the graduates received their certificates of completion and presented loved ones with roses for their support during the training class.

VDFP FYI

SAFETY/TRAINING TIP

Winter Safety:

Ice and snow during the winter months makes footing unsafe when dismounting emergency vehicles. When laddering structures, be sure that the foot of the ladder is well secured to prevent slipping after reaching the half-way point. Always observe where your feet are in inclement weather. Let's prevent any unnecessary injuries during the winter months.

PUBLIC EDUCATION TIP

Winter Heating:

Keep all supplemental room heaters (i.e. space heaters) at least 3 feet away from any combustible materials such as bedding, drapes and furniture.

Kerosene heaters should be filled outside of the house after they have completely cooled.



VDFP is "On the Move"

The consolidation of our VDFP headquarters to Glen Allen is nearing completion. It has been a long road toward consolidation, but the move will be completed by mid-February.

Our headquarters in Glen Allen provides office space for 33 employees and houses the expanded VDFP bookstore and a new resource library. We also have a board room and adjacent classroom with the latest audio-visual systems for meetings and classes. Our new address is: **1005 Technology Park Drive, Glen Allen, VA 23059**. Phone numbers are available on the VDFP website at www.vafire.com/directory.htm.

VDFP Welcomes New Staff

The VDFP is pleased to announce the addition of six persons to our team! Nausheen Khan and Dianett Phifer join the Policy, Planning and Legislative Affairs office as the *VSFB Clerk and Research Assistant*, and *Intern*. Demetria Jones joins the Communications, Public Affairs and Education office as the *Communications and Public Affairs Coordinator*.

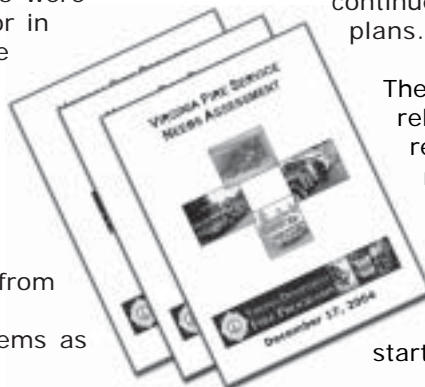
Susan Nichols joins Division 1 as an *Office Specialist*, Melissa Trombley joins Division 3 as an *Office Specialist*, and Fran Skeffington joins Division 7 as an *Administrative Assistant*. Welcome!!!

Needs Assessment Supplement

In response to VDFP's ongoing efforts to continually assess the needs of the fire service in Virginia, the **Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment Supplement** was released on December 17, 2004. The format of the supplement is similar to the original 2003 Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment in that a survey was launched and fire departments were asked to respond on the internet or in paper format. Only Parts I-IV of the survey were relaunched, which included fire in Virginia statistics, budget information, and departmental personnel and their capabilities.

Responses to the *Supplement I* survey reinforced the key findings from the 2003 Needs Assessment. Fire departments listed the following items as their biggest needs:

- Funding
- Staffing
- Training
- Apparatus
- Facilities
- Health and Safety
- Equipment



More specific statistical information was also included in the supplement regarding the needs of the Virginia Fire Service as reported by fire departments. The Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS) and the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) were both used in Supplement I to provide critical information for the continued development of fire prevention plans.

The *Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment* released in 2003, along with the newly released *2004 Supplement I*, offer a realistic picture of the needs of Virginia's fire service. VDFP would like to thank all of the fire departments who participated in this important endeavor. VDFP will release a supplement each year prior to the start of the Virginia General Assembly.

Visit www.vafire.com to download the Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment Supplement I in its entirety or call Christy King at 804/ 371-0220 to request a copy.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

Virginia Public Safety Day (State Capital)
Date: January 17, 2005
Richmond, VA

Virginia Professional Firefighters Reception
Date: January 18, 2005
Richmond, VA

February

Virginia In-State Weekend
Date: February 5-6, 2005
Fort Lee, VA

Virginia Fire Chief's Association
Mid-Atlantic Expo & Symposium
Date: February 24-27, 2005
Virginia Beach, VA

VFSB Meeting
Date: February 24-25, 2005
Virginia Beach, VA

VDFP Safety Tour
Date: February 26, 2005
Virginia Beach, VA

2005 Governor's Fire Services Awards
During VFCA Expo & Symposium
Date: February 25, 2005
Virginia Beach, VA

Legislative Link

The 2005 Virginia General Assembly Session began on January 12th. VDFP's Policy, Planning and Legislative Affairs Division will track issues related to fire and emergency services, and post updates on the website each week on Friday.

The Policy, Planning and Legislative Affairs Division will also continue to track national fire issues during the 109th Congress. Congressional tracking information will be posted monthly on the VDFP website.

Legislative tracking can be found at: www.vafire.com/legislation.htm.

For information regarding legislative issues please contact Ms. Christy King at 804/371-0220 or via email:

cking@vdfp.state.va.us

During the 2003 winter season there were*:

9,514 fires and 263 fire related injuries, resulting in \$75,340,146 in damages

* Source: Statistical information reported to the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS).